

## MODERATOR'S MESSAGE

By *Diane Waddell*

The time is truly NOW that we who love Creation must rise, reach out and reclaim a banner of urgency in caring for our Home. As climate change is upon us, there are many among us who are sensing the urgency of changing our overly consumptive ways. Many national and world leaders are crying out to be heard. Much of the media still prefers to cling to stories that distract us, such as the fate of the Malaysian jetliner. Yet we must hold our ground and be proactive in focusing discussion on how to tend the Garden with seeds of sustainability rather than with toxic chemicals leading to slow suffocation and destruction. The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has a huge and hugely significant report on the effects of climate change, which is coming in geometric proportions, much faster than previously predicted. After years of very disappointing responses from leading countries such as the U.S. at international climate conferences, many responsible world leaders have researched and prepared a document verifying the disaster upon us. (ipcc.ch) We who love Earth can feel her groaning under the effects of continued toxic effects of trying to extract more, pollute more, and call it progress.

A new series, "Years of Living Dangerously," is a set of 10 documentaries that explore the human impacts of climate change. One of many well-known concerned citizens highlighted is Katharine Hayhoe, PhD, an atmospheric scientist and evangelistic Christian, who PEC has previously been in contact with as a keynoter. Many people of faith including Presbyterians are hugely dedicated to working on healing the Earth and holding Earth sacred. Many have been heard at PEC conferences and many will be heard at General Assembly in Detroit this June. PEC continues to be a leader in the movement and is embracing those prophets who are working toward the true meaning of divestment from the fossil fuel industry. We are working also to hold up sustainable, responsible development and research in technology and production. We are grateful for Yukon Presbytery, who is sponsoring a young woman of indigenous heritage who will speak for the overture on the Precautionary Principle. PEC supports the overtures against coal export, the Overture on Food Sovereignty and against factory farming. Thanks to the extra effort of those presbyteries who concurred with these overtures in order to get them to GA. See these overtures on PC-BIZ. However, as important to get the information through the national level, it is the impact at the individual, congregational and community levels where we also must also focus.

*It is at the grass roots level that we need to feed, be fed, and become prophetic in calling for a return to more simple, beautiful, lifestyles and communities of caring, with responsible consumerism, living in gratitude to God, working to heal and hold sacred our Home. Amen.*

Diane Waddell  
PEC Moderator

Hear how the blessing  
breaks forth  
in your own voice

how your own lips  
form every word  
you never dreamed  
to say.

See how the blessing  
circles back again  
wanting you to  
repeat it  
but louder

how it draws you  
pulls you  
sends you  
to proclaim  
its only word:

risen  
risen  
risen.

Jan Richardson

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## SOME NEW AND CHANGING FACES FOR EARTH CARE

*With our next issue of the Update, we welcome a new editor. In this issue, we welcome two new members of Presbyterians for Earth Care's Steering Committee.*

### NEDDY ASTUDILLO, Editor of the Update

Neddy Astudillo is an eco-theologian and PCUSA pastor with a Doctor of Ministry degree on "Greening the Church" from Drew University. Neddy, a Venezuelan-American, is co-founder of the Angelic Organics Learning Center, a farm-based educational nonprofit in Northern Illinois where people connect with food, farming and caring for the earth. Neddy has taught Ecotheology in churches and ecumenical seminaries in Guatemala, Peru, Bolivia and Venezuela. Neddy is published in *Earth and Word: Classic Sermons on Saving the Planet* by David Rhoad and is a co-author of the NCCC Declaration and book *God's Earth is Sacred: Essays on Eco-Justice* (2011). Neddy is pastor of an ecumenical Latino congregation in Beloit, Wisconsin.



### RICK OWEN, Southwest Regional Representative

Rick is a member of Environmental Stewardship at Second Presbyterian Church, in Little Rock, Arkansas, and he leads the Earth Care Sunday School class at the church. Other activities include being a co-leader of Arkansas Climate Advocates, a grass-roots environmental group; and volunteering as a trail builder and interpreter as an Arkansas Master Naturalist. His lifelong love of nature and concern about environmental issues have evolved into activism as he discovered how faith, hope, love and justice are intertwined in our stewardship of God's creation. Rick is a psychiatrist and directs a research center at the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System. His wife Ann was a past Southwest Regional Representative, and he has two step-children.



### ABBY MOHAUPT, At-Large Representative

Abby Mohaupt is an eco-theologian and PCUSA pastor in Northern California. She holds a Master of Divinity and a Master of Theology in ecofeminist theology from McCormick Theological Seminary. Her research interests lie in the intersection of environmental theology and pastoral care, particularly how those fields of study call us to create a world in which all creation knows that they are loved and valuable. She's prone to using humor and creativity in worship and pastoral care. She currently splits her time between First Presbyterian Church in Palo Alto, CA, and Puente de la Costa Sur (a resource center for farm workers and their families) in Pescadero, CA. She's served PEC for the last couple of years as the editor of the Update.



## UPDATE ON OVERTURES *by Diane Waddell*

At General Assembly this year, Committee 15 (“Immigration and Environmental Issues”) will review 5 overtures related to the environment. It will hear Overture 050, “On Affirming the Importance of Sustainable Development and the Precautionary Principle”. Overture 049 entitled “On Food Sovereignty for All” will go to Committee 09 on Social Justice Issues.

The Food Sovereignty Overture calls the 221<sup>st</sup> GA to “affirm and support Food Sovereignty, a framework and approach to food and farm systems which addresses the root causes of hunger and poverty globally. Humanity is confronted with the tragedy of hunger in a world that produces enough food for all to eat. PC(USA) church partners and fraternal organizations around the world are calling for food sovereignty as a way of building prosperous, healthy, equitable and sustainable food and farm economies everywhere. This includes supporting fair trade; the right to food and water, access to land; ecological agriculture and health-giving food; more localized decision-making, and equity for everyone throughout the food system....” It comes from the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta with concurrence of Heartland Presbytery and the Presbytery of Lake Michigan.

The overture on sustainable development and the Precautionary Principle states that the principle is a “basis for a responsible, moral and ethical means of working and being. It affirms the Sacred in societal and Creation care, protecting Earth for future generations.” It calls for a “study group to review this principle and prepare a study paper for use by congregations throughout the denomination, enabling congregations to advocate for reform.” The term Precautionary Principle is derived from a German word meaning “forecaring.” If introduced into American law, the precautionary principle would fundamentally shift the burden of proof of the safety of products and processes for the public to the manufacturer to show safety of the product before it is brought to market. This overture comes from the Presbytery of Northern New England, with concurrence of Heartland Presbytery and the Presbytery of Yukon.

An Overture from the Presbytery of Monmouth “Against Factory Farming” is seeking concurrence. It recommends the resource “Just Eating? Practicing Our Faith at the Table” in addition to its work against factory farming.

PEC is grateful for those who have written and concurred with these overtures as well as other overtures related to social and environmental justice. We ask that members and friends of PEC seek to promote endorsements from commissioners, and also work to inform individual congregations of the importance of the concepts embodied in these overtures.

## Servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Corinthians 4:1b)

### Check out these opportunities for travel and learning

Listening to Earth, Opening to God  
June 23-June 29, 2014  
Ghost Ranch

What are Earth’s voices saying to us? How do we listen? And how do we respond so as to celebrate life, embrace hope, and work together for Earth care and self-care on an endangered planet? Women’s experience and voices will be highlighted—Native-American, African-American, Anglo-American and Latina-American. Men’s voices will join. Presentations, conversations, contemplative practices, art, prayer and ritual come together in this retreat facilitated by Larry Rasmussen and including Neddy Astudillo, Melanie L. Harris, Mary Ann Lundy, and Janet Parker. More information at [www.ghostranch.org](http://www.ghostranch.org)

Seeing the Signs of the Times:  
A Practical Theology for Living in a Changing World  
Regional Conference in Anchorage, Alaska  
September 2 to 7, 2014

The Yukon PEC invites 37 people to journey to their beautiful state for a moving (from Anchorage to Fairbanks) examination of four dramatic signs of climate change: shrinking glaciers, vanishing polar ice caps, melting permafrost and the affects on living things, including people. Alaskan scientists on the scene, Alaska Native indigenous leaders, and Alaskan faith leaders will lead in a praxis model of engagement with, and reflection on, one area's challenges in a time of radical climate degradation. Mark your calendars and watch for complete details at [www.presbyearthcare.org](http://www.presbyearthcare.org).

If you would like to donate to a scholarship fund for this trip, please contact Holly Hallman

## ECO-STEWARDS UPDATE

by Vickie Machado

*Eco-Stewards Gainesville is here and I am proud to present our 2014 Eco-Stewards. We will spend May 18-24 exploring Gainesville, Florida as we connect our faith to the environmental and social justice issues of this area. Our journey's theme will focus on food, faith, and community as we discover how people/groups/collectives of this region are placing their beliefs into action.*

*Audrey Holt, 23, is a PC(USA) Young Adult Volunteer currently based in Boston, where she works on food justice issues. Her work with a PC(USA) and United Church of Christ (UCC) congregation and a nonprofit community day shelter for women deals with issues surrounding food systems, access and waste. "Just as my family, food, and home were a gift, so is this giant planet. I am thankful for what it provides and therefore I feel the need to preserve it." With roots in Kansas and the Baptist tradition, Audrey enjoys writing and reflecting with others as well as pie baking and homemade noodle making.*

*Colleen Earp, 28, is currently in New Orleans serving as a PC(USA) Young Adult Volunteer. She acts as Wetlands Advocate, which involves education, raising awareness, and actively practicing conservation through planting and monitoring vegetation. She recently attended PEC's national gathering at Ferncliff. "The world is too beautiful and perfect to have happened by accident. It's very easy for me to see God in a big old tree, in billions of grains of sand on a beach, in a stunning sunrise or a dreary weather pattern." Colleen holds a B.A. and M.S. in Geography, focused on the physical environment and human-environment interactions. She worked for many years at a Presbyterian camp, enabling youth and adults to interact with creation physically and spiritually.*

*Chelsea Guenther Benhem, 25, is currently a student at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, where she coordinates the campus's community*

*garden. Chelsea is interested in the spiritual aspects of gardening. "I think that gardening is an opportunity to help the church develop embodied learning that connects God, self, and creation. Gardening cultivates joy, care and attention." She also serves as an intern at Crescent Hill Presbyterian (USA) Church in Louisville.*

*Jake Lawlor, 21, is a student at the University of Texas, studying Environmental Science with a focus in Biology. He spent a summer studying sustainability in Northern Tanzania and works as a program director at Camp Fire after school programs. This summer Jake will be founding the Environmental Stewardship Program at John Knox Ranch, a Presbyterian Church (USA) summer camp in Central Texas. "I find the best places to worship are outside in God's creation." He also enjoys volunteering with Austin Parks Foundation, Pease Park Conservancy, and Texas Adopt-A-Creek*

*Anna Mullen, 24, is a student at Harvard Divinity School, where she is currently pursuing a Master of Divinity degree with a personal focus on environmental ethics and eco-theologies. Anna, who is affiliated with the United Methodist Church, is also the manager of the Harvard Divinity School Garden and a Field Education Intern at Peace Lutheran Church. "I am particularly excited about the prospect of participating in this program because of its focus on the interconnectedness of food, water, faith communities, and environmental, as well as economic, justice." Anna also spent a year as a full-time residential volunteer at the Heifer International Learning Center at Overlook Farm in Rutland, MA.*

*Jess Rigel, 30, is a PC(USA) Young Adult Volunteer in New Orleans where she works as a community gardener. She first became passionate about eco-stewardship while serving as a YAV in Cascabel, Arizona. "Through my love of food and community gardening, I've realized that it's impossible to respond to Jesus' call to feed his sheep without making sure the land on which we grow our food is first provided for."*



## Why did I join PEC?

The question is more, why didn't I remain a member from 1995? Rev. Bill Gibson, a founding member of Presbyterians for Restoring Creation, the precursor to PEC, labored in Susquehanna Presbytery while I was there finishing seminary at Colgate Rochester Divinity School. PRC was founded in 1995, the same year I graduated. I have my PRC shirt from one of the original gatherings. When I finally felt a call to ministry a year later, I then became busy with Hebrew, Greek, CPE, and ordination exams . . . things other folk were smart enough to do while surrounded by their peers in seminary. On the night I was voted to candidacy, Bill sat with me at the presbytery meeting, gave me some subversive advice I have always remembered (and passed along to those awaiting ordination), and escorted me outside during the vote. Months later I was off to my first call and had become involved in Presbyterians for Disability Concerns activism, an area in which I had particular theological and experiential gifts to offer. And somewhere along the line, my membership lapsed.

I'm not sure when I picked up again with PEC – perhaps not more than 2 years ago at GA in Pittsburgh. I had felt a nudge the previous year, after reading some articles about factory farming (technically, about CAFOs [Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations] and IFAPS [Industrial Food Animal Production Sites]) which had led me to a conference on animal rights. I learned a lot more than I wanted to about animal cruelty in our food system, and for the second time in my life became a vegetarian – but this time, with commitment. And I began reading. My vision grew to wanting to write an overture against CAFOs, etc. for the 2014 GA. Sue Smith, the PEC treasurer, introduced me to Diane Waddell at the 2012 GA, where an overture Diane had shepherded had just passed.

But time went on, things got crazy at church, and I lost the vision. Then, with the support of the Monmouth Presbytery Mission Working Group and Phyllis Zoon, our Hunger Action Enabler, I was able to attend PEC's Ethical Earth Care Conference last October at Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center in Little Rock, AK. Diane led a "how to" group on writing overtures, and speaker Andrew Kang Bartlett encouraged me that CAFOs were an area not completely covered yet in our other work, so I came back and had the overture written – with feedback from several experts and my home crew – by mid-January. It is, however, too late for 2014, unless OVT 67 becomes a Commissioners Resolution, because our presbytery didn't pass it until late March – too late for another presbytery to concur.

My feeling, however, is that in God's time, we may grow to see that the issues of growing animals for food have such a significant impact on the environment, on several vulnerable communities, on global hunger and health, that this document – a bare speck in the larger concern of Food Sovereignty, Climate Change, and Environmental Degradation – will become a thread in a larger tapestry in our 2016 overtures. My 3 years of study have opened my eyes. Beginning with compassion for non-human animals, to the awareness of the huge impact of their feed, waste, transport, illness, hormones, etc., etc. on human and global health, I am astounded at the lack of attention this large issue has been given.

So I am now a grateful PEC-lifer. And I pray that some commissioners at GA are also.

Grace and peace,  
Robin Lostetter  
Pastor, First Presbyterian, Bordentown NJ

Presbyterians for Earth Care (PEC) invites individuals and congregations to participate in the growing earth care movement within the Presbyterian Church (USA). PEC is a national eco-justice network that cares for God's creation by connecting, equipping, and inspiring Presbyterians to make creation care a central concern of the church. Founded in 1995 as a grassroots organization to help the denomination educate and energize church members to address environmental concerns from a faith perspective, it works in partnership with PC(USA)'s Environmental Ministries Office and the Office of Public Witness to promote earth justice with a biblical and theological base. Regional representatives recruit presbyteries, churches, organizations, and individuals to help form a national network of Presbyterians to work toward the common goal of restoring creation for ecology and justice. Check out PEC's web site at [www.presbyearthcare.org](http://www.presbyearthcare.org) If you would like to become involved or have questions, contact Tricia at [presbyearthcare@gmail.com](mailto:presbyearthcare@gmail.com) or your regional representative.

## FOOD TALK: A Conversation with Jennifer Ayres

by Abby Mohaupt

*Rev. Dr. Jennifer Ayres was one of my first professors when I was a student at McCormick Theological Seminary, and later we shared a desk at Faith in Place, an interfaith environmental nonprofit in Chicago, IL. Her new book, Good Food: Grounded in Practical Theology (2013), is available from Baylor University Press. Dr. Ayres is currently the Assistant Professor of Religious Education and Director of the Religious Education Program at Chandler School of Theology in Atlanta, GA. Here, she shares some of her thoughts on food and faith... and what a "foodie" Eucharist would look and taste like.*

When I was a grad student at Emory I was teaching at the Youth Theological Initiative and I was teaching a course on globalization and faith. Our contextualized learning site was the Atlanta Community Food Bank. We did a bunch of things with them: learned about hunger, packed up food, and one day we went out to one of the 170 community gardens and picked for a few hours. When we first got there, it was July in Atlanta—there was a lot of complaining and there were lots of bugs but in about an hour, the students settled in and we had a great time—there was some kind of transformation that happened that they were laughing, running around the garden. They asked why it was in this community? Why aren't community members helping? Where's the grocery store in this area? It's this side effect of what happens to people in the garden that has kept me interested in ecology in general.

There are so many practical actions that churches and individuals can take from a food sovereignty point of view. Growing food requires technical knowledge, and even though there's usually some people around to help, there has to be an indigenous desire, not some outside group coming in and making people do it. The community has to look at itself and want to be part of the project.

In addition, there also always have to be a policy effort and an effort to educate people what resources exist. In the Farm Bill, for example, there are

some efforts to promote more local control. There are smaller grants for organic farming and horticulture, and there used to be community food program grants for local food security. But one of the places I heard "food sovereignty" was in Mexico—so we need to be paying attention to our trade policies and asking whether or not our trade policies support local farmers in other parts of the world.

The thing I learned studying these communities [for the book] is that hope doesn't exist in the policies... talking about Whole Foods which sells meat at grade 5 (highest grade you can get)—that's a really easy place to buy trusted meat, but at the same time Whole Foods doesn't have good labor practices. We can't look to consumer capitalism for a hopeful future.

People in this movement are prone to despair because it's so big and complicated but then you meet people who are cultivating their little piece of the world. There is so much ease with which they enjoy the food they're growing or preparing. There is hope in the hearts of these people who experience joy in doing this work, who celebrate by sharing their food with friends, family, and strangers. It's not hard to fall in love with the people who are doing this work (to provide local food in communities)—they're not naive about how hard this is but they're not deterred by the forces of death that are working against them. It might seem totally impractical to have faith in places like these places where communities are working for food sovereignty.

But the Eucharist reminds us that sometimes it's not about what's practical. The Eucharist is a glimpse of the kingdom of God. And a foodie Eucharist (or a celebration of communion that valued what food was on the table) would dig into the biblical images of milk and honey. There would be homemade bread and local juice. There would be more artisanal cheese—to be more substantial. In Atlanta, at St. John's Lutheran Church, they celebrate the end of the Easter Vigil with champagne and a huge feast... there's so much hope in the unearthing of the beauty of the world around us.

## COMFORT IN THE WATERS

by Vickie Machado

*And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good.” Gen 1:10 (KJV)*

While I find God’s presence throughout the natural world, I continuously discover His power through water. There is something truly living about His Waters, making it a source of peace and power. Early on, He united the waters, calling it the Seas, and, more importantly, calling it good.

Cycling on two levels, the surface and the skies, this water acts as the life giving circulatory system that keeps the world in check—giving and taking away in a second. Powerful enough to move a mountain or sometimes a city, and yet gentle and patient enough to smooth even the roughest of edges through years or even an eon of work. It is the same water that quenches thirst and baptizes. His extensive oceans, rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, wetlands, aquifers, all unite together sooner or later to circle the globe cooling, comforting, sometimes terrifying, but ultimately giving life to all things and people.

It is within this water that I draw comfort. For me, its fluidity offers a life path worth following. My relationship with Christ has been just that— a hydrological cycle, represented by a series of surface water,



Paynes Prairie Preserve in Gainesville, FL (northern FL)

evaporation, and precipitation. The seasons of my life have easily flowed from one stage to the next. Needless to say, fluidity does not necessarily mean smooth. Periods of thunderstorms, rough waves, and let’s face it—even natural disasters have occurred. But somehow, through all of this, the cycle continues and Christ presents Himself in the most beautiful ways possible.

*Vickie Machado recently graduated from the University of Florida where she received her Masters of Arts in Religion and Nature. She is a leader and an organizer for the Eco-Stewards Program 2014, Food & Faith: Connecting Together in A Southern Foodshed,*

## COAL EXPORT OVERTURE UPDATE

by Holly Hallman

I met a man recently from the Lummi Nation. He expressed his tremendous gratitude to the PC (USA) for considering the issue of coal trains passing through his peoples’ sacred ground. He told me how the Army Corp of Engineers and one of our Senators came to his tribe and told the tribe that if they said “no” to the coal trains it was the end of the issue. The tribe said “no”. But, now they keep coming back and back saying, “are you sure?”

Isn’t that an old story? Haven’t we worn the tribes down for the last 150 years, finding some enticement to get them to break the treaties that protect their lands? If this Coal Overture passes at our June General Assembly it tells the Lummi people to hold

on—that we are behind them and want what is right for them and for the fish that support them. The Lummi have much that they can teach us about living in harmony with our good earth. We prayed together, the Saturday we met, for God’s creation and our part in keeping it healthy.

If you are a delegate to GA or know of someone who is please ask them to read this short and to-the-point overture and help it on its way to helping poor people living at sea level around the globe—including our Lummi friends. To see the whole document please go to <http://pc-biz.org/Explorer.aspx?id=4699>.



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